MINISTRY AND PRIESTHOOD: CHRIST'S AND OURS

TWO LECTURES

by

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MINISTRY AND PRIESTHOOD: CHRIST'S AND OURS

A.S. Peake Memorial lecture No. 2

TO THE HONOURED MEMORY OF

ARTHUR SAMUEL PEAKE (1865-1929)

AND

JOHN SCOTT LIDGETT (1854-1953)

οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ
διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν

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PREFACE

THE TWO lectures which make up this booklet are memorial lectures. The first, given by invitation of the Free Church Federal Council at their Annual Congress in Liverpool on 22nd March 1956, commemorates that great Free Churchman Dr John Scott Lidgett. The matter and manner of the discourse were determined for me mainly by the character and achievements of Dr Scott Lidgett himself and, to a lesser degree, by the nature of the Congress and the audience addressed. The second lecture, delivered under the auspices of the Methodist Conference on 12th July 1957, commemorates Professor A. S. Peake, whose fine biblical scholarship brought distinction to Hartley College and to the Theological Faculty of the University of Manchester. As this lecture was written in honour of a great scholar, I have thought it permissible to retain the scaffolding of footnotes about the text; and I hope that some of those who will read the book may find them interesting and useful. I count it no small honour to have been asked to give these lectures and I am very grateful to the authorities in the Free Church Federal Council and the Methodist Church to whom I owe the invitations.

T. W. M.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS AND THE TASK OF HIS CHURCH

SOME ASPECTS OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS AND THE TASK OF HIS CHURCH[1]

MAY I BEGIN by saying how fitting I think it that the Free Church Federal Council should have chosen this way of commemorating one of the greatest Free Churchmen of our time, and also how much I appreciate the honour and privilege of giving the first Scott Lidgett Lecture? I have thought a good deal about the way I should set about this responsible task. It would have been easy to produce a narrowly specialized academic discourse, or alternatively to seize this opportunity to beat the Nonconformist big drum. Doubtless there is time and place for exercises of this kind; but it is not here, and it is not now.

The man we commemorate should, for this time at least, dictate the subject matter and the manner of the discourse; and when one considers the range of his interests, the versatility of his mind, the depth of his convictions, and the breadth of his sympathies, the conclusion is obvious that for this hour we should turn our minds to great issues and try our best to think greatly and generously about them. And so

[1]The Scott Lidgett Memorial Lecture, 1956.

I have chosen as my subject 'Some Aspects of the Ministry of Jesus and the Task of his Church'.

These are not two things separate and unrelated which we are now to try to bring together in thought. They are one. The ministry of Jesus is the standard and pattern of the Church's task; but, more than that, the Church's task is the continuation of the ministry of Jesus. All our ecclesiastical designs are to be tested against the master plan depicted in the gospel. All our endeavours are to be understood as ways in which the Risen Lord continues his work in the world. If we want to have right conceptions of the Church, what it is, and what it has to do here and now, there is one way and one way only by which we can get them, and that is by considering Jesus of Nazareth as he is portrayed for us in the gospels, what he is and what he does there and then.

We have, of course, to reckon with the fact that every serious student of the gospel will reach his own conclusions on matters of literary and historical criticism, and the views put forward will inevitably be coloured by those conclusions. There is an inescapable element of subjective choice and interpretation; but that is something which applies to any investigation of matters of history and we must just put up with it. The aspects of the ministry are those I see, as I see them, after a good many years of the most careful study of which I am capable. I cannot guarantee that what I see and the way I see

it is one hundred per cent or even seventy-five per cent right; but it is as right as I know how to make it.

Let me turn then to consider three aspects of the ministry of Jesus and three aspects of the task of his Church. These may be expressed by saying Jesus the Teacher, Christ the Conqueror, and Christ the Sacrifice. I begin with Jesus the Teacher and the teaching task of the Church.

Half a century ago this was deemed to be the key to the whole New Testament and the classic example of this understanding of the New Testament and the Gospel was Harnack's famous book, *What is Christianity?*—the record of a series of lectures, given at six o'clock in the morning in the University of Berlin, which crowded the lecture-room to the doors. That work presents a very engaging picture of the good prophet of Nazareth telling his contemporaries in simple, well-chosen words, about the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man and the infinite value of the individual human soul—all of them, without question, matters of supreme importance.

In our day there has been reaction against this interpretation, a reaction which is justified up to a point, so far in fact as it is a reaction against the things that Harnack and his friends left out, but in no way justified as a reaction against the things he and they kept in. Like all reactions, it is in danger of going much too far and losing what is true in the

process of getting rid of half-truths and positive errors. It is therefore necessary for us to look again at the Teacher and the teaching presented in the gospel.

Let me ask you to look first at that text in Matthew 10^{5-6} at the sending out of the Twelve on their missionary tour: 'Do not go off on any road that leads to Gentile territory and enter into no Samaritan town, but rather go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.'

On that it may be said that a teacher, whose main business in life was to propagate two or three simple religious truths of the kind laid down by Harnack, had no need—and indeed no right—to make restrictions of this sort. If you have a message which consists of three simple religious propositions, the more widely your simple religious propositions can be broadcast the better. There is no visible point in concealing the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and the value of the individual human soul from the Gentiles or Samaritans. If it does them no good to know about it, it can do them no harm. It was important for all; and all, under Article 3 of this revelation, had a right to know about it. It is no use putting down this restriction, as some commentators have tried to do, to Matthew's particularism, for Matthew is as universalist as anyone. Consider, for example verse 18 in this chapter; or 24^{14}, or 28^{18-20}. Matthew did not create this limitation of the disciples' mission—he found it.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the teaching of Jesus was not just a few simple, religious truths that anyone might have thought of and anyone could accept. It goes a great deal deeper than that.

Consider another text which has become a standing enigma to commentators. In St Mark's gospel (4^{11}) Jesus says to his intimates: 'To you the secret of the Kingdom of God has been given, but to those outside everything comes in parables.' Oceans of ink have been spilt over this verse and the verse that follows it, and the problems of interpretation are still far from being satisfactorily cleared up. But this much is clear—there are quite evidently two levels of teaching and two levels of comprehension. There is the man in the street who gets his instruction in parabolic form. He is given the parables of the Kingdom. Those parables show pictorially how the Rule of God operates in the world, and only hardness of heart can prevent men from seeing the point and accepting what is offered. But that is not the end of the matter. There is also this Inner Circle to whom the secret of the Rule of God has been given, and I suspect that the operative word is the word 'secret', something to which the general public do not have access. 'To *you* the secret of God's rule has been given.' Another way of putting that would be to say that these men have been allowed to hear the State secrets, the top secret plans of the heavenly Kingdom.

But what is there that can be produced as evidence

of the truth of that assertion? There is nothing to show that at this stage[2] the disciples had any information that was not available to the general public. There is nothing to show that they had any understanding of the parabolic material that was not available to the public—in fact, the evidence is to the contrary. Then what did the disciples have that was not accorded to the general public? Nothing at all, so far as I can see—except one thing: the fact that they had been admitted to intimate friendship with Jesus himself. They had been officially appointed as his associates: 'He appointed twelve that they should be with him' (Mark 3^{14}). They were to learn the profoundest truths of the Kingdom simply by being in his company, and he was to teach them the profoundest truths of the Kingdom simply by being himself.

So far as we human beings are concerned, the final truth about the Rule of God is to be learned from the obedience of the Messiah, and ultimately not by looking at it but by sharing in it. Here, I think, we are to find the explanation of the astonishing authority with which Jesus taught. And the astonishment which that authority evoked is constantly referred to in the gospel narrative. It was not, I think, the bogus force of the fanatical propagandist, neither was it, and we are told explicitly that it was not, the well-authenticated pronouncement of a professional

[2] Later in the ministry, after Peter's confession, they were told more about the purpose of the Messianic ministry and found it very hard to take it in.

theologian. It was not, I think, the mellow reflections of the refined religious thinker. It was the quiet but unshakeable assurance of one who knew God's will and was totally committed to it, one who came offering the sure mercies and declaring the unquestionable demands of the Most High.

Now what is the bearing of all that on the teaching of the Christian Church? The obvious thing to say is that a teaching Church stands in need of three things—matter to teach, method in teaching, and authority. Where are they to be found?

First, on matter. One thing that seems to emerge from the discussion up to this point is that we should think of Jesus not simply as the Teacher *par excellence*, but as the Teaching *par excellence*. If we do that we are going back in the direction of thoughts that came quite readily to some of the deepest thinkers in the Early Church. Origen said that Jesus was the Kingdom of God itself. Some scholars have come to the conclusion that Jesus himself is the new Law of God; and I think we are not going too far if we see in Jesus himself not only the Teacher but the Teaching. For this I think we can find some justification in the New Testament itself. An interesting sidelight is in the Letter to the Ephesians (4^{20}). 'It is not in this way that you have learned Christ.' Christ is the direct object of the verb. The lesson is not about Christ: it is not Christian doctrine, or Christian ethics, or Christian principles: it is Christ himself. The

writer speaks of learning Christ as you might learn algebra or French. It is an extraordinary statement, and one, I think, that goes to the heart of the matter.

St Paul again in Philippians 3^{10} speaks about knowing him—not knowing about him, but knowing him. The subject of the Church's teaching is Jesus himself.

Once more we can appeal to St Paul (1 Cor 2^{1-2}): 'When I came to you, brethren, I came to you not with overwhelming eloquence or wisdom, proclaiming the mysteries of God. For I had made up my mind not to know anything among you, except Jesus the Messiah, and him crucified'—that is, 'Jesus the Messiah, and a crucified Messiah at that'. What St Paul was offering was not the theories of a religious thinker, but the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the crucified Messiah. And he was offering these things not as interesting historical events, but as the revelation of the very mind and heart of God himself.

Next, the method. What is taught is a living Christ, and, in the last resort, living is not taught effectively by talking about life but by living. The Twelve learned what they learned by being with Jesus, by seeing him at work day by day. They passed on what they had learned when he sent them out to proclaim the Rule of God and to have the power to expel demons. That is a brief and compendious way of saying that they were sent to do the same things that their Master was already doing,

to be the focal points at which the love and power of God could meet the needs of men.

That is true, I think, of the Early Church as a whole. The Christianity that conquered the Roman Empire was not an affair of brilliant preachers addressing packed congregations. We have, so far as I know, nothing much in the way of brilliant preachers in the first three hundred years of the Church's life. There were one or two brilliant controversialists, but I suspect that they made more enemies than friends; and the greatest of them all, Origen, was probably over the heads of most people most of the time. The great preachers came after Constantine the Great; and before that Christianity had already done its work and made its way right through the Empire from end to end. When we try to picture how it was done we seem to see domestic servants teaching Christ in and through their domestic service, workers doing it through their work, small shopkeepers through their trade, and so on, rather than eloquent propagandists swaying mass meetings of interested inquirers.

It is still true that the best propaganda for genuine Christianity is genuine Christians; and the New Testament is full of declarations of the convincing power, not of the spoken word, but of the lived life. Indeed, I think it is fair to say that the lives of Christians will have to be the parables of the Kingdom for the twentieth century.

But there is more involved than that. This is

how we are to commend Christ to those outside. To those within is still given the secret of the Kingdom of God, and to them alone. One of the great illusions is to suppose that the deepest meaning of Christianity is available to every Tom, Dick, and Harry who happens to be curious about it. That kind of curiosity is not to be satisfied. It is to those within that the secret of the Kingdom of God is given and it is given in the fellowship of the Word and the Holy Sacraments. Those outside must learn Christ, so far as they may, through his reflection in Christian lives. Those in the Church will learn him in the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection, in his real presence wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. So much for learning Christ; and I turn now to Christ the Conqueror and the Holy War of the Church.

A book by the eminent Scandinavian theologian, Bishop Aulén, dealing with the history of doctrine brought that aspect to prominence a good many years ago. And I think that Aulén's *Christus Victor* is a book that deserves serious study still. More recently, another Scandinavian scholar, Ragnar Leivestad has explored the field of New Testament theology with Christ the Conqueror as the subject of his inquiry. It is not my purpose, and there is no time today, to go over the careful and detailed analysis given by Leivestad and I must be content to touch upon a few outstanding matters.

The first is the obvious contrast between the Kingdom of God and some other Kingdom—call it the Kingdom of Satan, or Belial or the Devil or Sin, or simply the kingdoms of this world. The conflict is there already in pre-Christian Jewish writings. The most recent discoveries from Palestine, the Dead Sea Scrolls, have presented us with one treatise which deals specifically with the War of the Children of Light against the Children of Darkness. In pre-Christian Jewish thinking the tendency is to see God's Realm as represented on earth by the Chosen People, Israel, and the other hostile Kingdom represented on earth by the successive world empires. And so the struggle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan tends to be translated into the political tension between the Jews and whoever happens to be oppressing them at the moment. In the days of Jesus the tension was between Israel and Imperial Rome. And for the average Jew of those days the triumph of the Kingdom of God, the conquests of the Messiah, meant in effect the vindication of the people of God against their earthly enemies: in other words, the victory of the Kingdom of Israel over the Roman Empire. Now if there is one thing that is outstanding in the gospel story, it is the plain and simple fact that Jesus utterly refused to be drawn into this political conflict on any terms whatsoever. The critical issue is the issue of the tribute money which has recently been illuminated I think through the

discussion by E. Stauffer.[3] The point as he puts it is clear and simple. Every Jew in Palestine at that time was liable for two poll-taxes, payable one to the Temple and the other to the Empire. One was payable in the coinage that was accepted in the Temple—the Tyrian shekel. The other was payable in the coinage of the Empire, the Roman denarius bearing the Emperor's effigy and inscription. Two taxes, two coinages. And the solution that Jesus gave to the problem put before him was this, that people must pay both—they must pay the Temple tax and they must pay the Imperial tax. And they must understand what they were doing in either case. The Temple tax was a token of the loyalty they owed to God; and the Imperial tax was a token of their subjection to the Roman Empire, a subjection from which they had no right to try to break free.

Though Jesus was constantly unwilling to take part in that contest, he was always ready to do battle of another kind—a kind that sounds strange and perhaps unintelligible to us today—battle against the demons, against those mysterious forces that degrade and destroy men and women from within. A classic example of this is his own statement on the issue, given in Luke 11[19]: 'If I by the finger of God cast out demons, that means that the Kingdom of God has come upon you.' In other words: 'If I by the power of God, defeat the evil forces that hold

[3] *Christ and the Caesars* (1955), pp. 112-37.

men and women in degradation and bring them to destruction, if I defeat them, and set men and women upon their feet, and enable them to live a life worthy of children of God, that is the proof that the Kingdom of God is a present reality in your midst. And there is no other. You ask for signs: this is the only sign that will be given.'

All that is brought together in the account of the Temptations given by Matthew and Luke. I do not want to say anything more about this than that it must have come from Jesus himself, and it must be his way of saying what things he was not prepared to undertake in the course of his ministry. And the things that are brought together in thought in the Temptations are brought together in acute reality in the Passion. There the real victory won by Christ the Conqueror is a victory that is won in those three days, beginning in Gethsemane and ending on the first Easter Day, and every day since. In the light of that, what is the Church's task?

If Jesus refused to put himself at the disposal of the most reputable political movement in his own country and in his own day, it seems to me to follow that the Church can never be the handmaid of any political party or any political movement, no matter how good its programme may be or how exalted its motives. There are other things that need to be done, but not this thing. It is not the business of the Church to be one of the Kingdoms of this world; and I take leave to say that fanatical nationalistic

ecclesiastics are just about as far away as they can get from the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not the business of the Church to be a super-Kingdom, as the Roman Church has tried to be from time to time, lording it over the lives and consciences of men and women and exercising a super-tyranny over the tyrannies of the kingdoms of this world. The truth in the New Testament is stated simply by St Paul. Our warfare is not against flesh and blood: it is against the spiritual hosts of wickedness. In other words we say that we fight the same battle that our Lord fought in his ministry, a battle against the spiritual powers that degrade and destroy men and women from within.

This warfare is one in which truth must triumph over falsehood: by exposing the falsehood—not by brow-beating or brain-washing the victims of it. It is a conflict in which goodness must overcome evil, but must overcome it by shaming it, by drawing its servants from their false to their true allegiance. The conflict is a conflict between Satan and God, and the victory is won whenever a member is detached from the body of Satan and attached to the body of Christ.

This victory is won in obedience to God. It was won in principle in the Garden when the Messiah said: 'Not my will, but thine.' It is won again whenever obedience of this quality is offered by the followers of the Messiah.

Finally, I should like to say just a word about

Christ the Sacrifice, and the sacrifice of the Church. I think it has become abundantly clear in recent work on the gospels that one thing and a most significant thing that our Lord did was to take those two figures from the Old Testament, the Son of Man and the Servant of the Lord, and to describe the Son of Man in terms taken from the picture of the Servant of the Lord. And that means that that Son of Man, who in Daniel is represented as a triumphant figure, has to be represented in the gospels as a figure of sacrifice. There is no question that in the latter part of his ministry our Lord saw that the way of victory was and had to be the way of sacrifice. We have abundant proof of that in three profound sayings which speak of the Passion of the Son of Man, and there is no time to say more than one thing about them: that if you examine those three sayings as they occur in the eighth, ninth and tenth chapters of Mark, you will find that each one of them is accompanied by a contrasting piece displaying the selfish ambition, pride, and prejudice of the followers of Jesus. In each case those Passion sayings are put over against the arrogance and selfishness of men.

One other thing that I think is worth noting comes in the twenty-second chapter of Luke. There, on the very eve of the crucifixion, you have in the mouth of Jesus the one unambiguous quotation from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the greatest and longest of the Servant Songs (Luke 22^{37}). It comes

in a context which shows more clearly than any other in the New Testament the bitterness of the cup of frustration and defeat. Jesus looks back to the earlier days when his messengers could be sure of a welcome as they went about their task.

'Did you ever go short?'

'No, never.'

'Well, times have changed. Anyone who has money or provisions had better take them with him. Anyone who hasn't a sword will be well advised to sell his coat and buy one. For one text of Scripture is bound to come true for me: "He was counted among the criminals." My life is coming to its end.'

'As for swords, Sir, there are two here.'

'Enough, enough!'

The disciples are willing to take all risks and fight it out. Jesus is accepting the worst at its worst, and, in the fullest and highest sense, making the best of it. Here is the true greatness of the Saviour. We call it self-sacrifice. It is self-sacrifice that would be more accurately described as self-expendability in love and obedience to God and love and service to men.

One significant incident in the gospel story which I should like to mention at this point is the story of the woman with the haemorrhage who came up behind Jesus in the crowd as he was on the way to the house of Jairus. She said to herself: 'If only I can touch his garment I shall be cured.' She did and she was. And Jesus turned round and said: 'Who

touched me?' And the disciples, good common-sense folk like you and me, said: 'Good heavens man, look at the crowds round you. They are thronging in on every side and you say, "Who touched me?" Twenty people have touched you in the last ten seconds.' He said: 'No—somebody touched me in a different way, and power went out.'

That is not so remote from human experience as you might think. Parallels could be found in many fields of human activity where men and women spend themselves on something or somebody more important to them than their own health and comfort. No doubt this was a special kind of power, but it went out. Something was expended. And the whole ministry of Jesus was made up of expenditures of that kind. If that is a true picture, we may well believe that everything he did must have cost him something. We cannot know how much; we may well believe that the biggest things he did cost most.

Where does the Church come in in that? St Paul speaks in Colossians (1^{24}) of filling up in his own body what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Commentators have had a terrific time making careful Latin distinctions between sufferings that are *satisfactoriae* and those which are *aedificatoriae*, in order to create some kind of difference between Paul and his Master and so preserve the uniqueness of the sufferings of Christ. The same St Paul in the twelfth chapter of Romans tells Christians to offer themselves as a living sacrifice to God. A couple of

centuries later the greatest of the Early Church Fathers, Origen, in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, speaks about the sufferings of the martyrs as being somehow added to or taken up into the sufferings of Christ. There is here a real mystery, but the profoundest thought of the primitive Church was sure that you could not make a complete and unbridgeable gulf between the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of his followers, who in fellowship with him and in obedience to his will carried out their share, as they understood it, of his task.

And it may be that it is the business of the Christian Church and its members to be expendable in obedience to God for the common good. It may be that the sacrifice of Christ, which has been pinned down in history to a date and place in Palestine, is also an eternal sacrifice, and that Christ in his Church offers the Church which is his body. It could be true.

When you look at the New Testament as a whole, I think you will find that our three strands are woven together and each of them has its own special emphasis in its own section of the Canon. It is in the writings of John, the Fourth Gospel and the first Epistle above all, that we see Jesus portrayed as Teaching, as the whole truth about God so far as it can be imparted to men. It is in St Paul that we have the clearest picture of the great victory of the Son of God over the forces of evil that hold men in thrall. And it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews that

we have the clearest picture—I am sorry it is not more widely studied—of the sacrifice in which Christ is at once priest and victim.

All these things hang together, they make a single and I think soul-satisfying picture. And what runs through the whole thing from first to last, what gives meaning to Teaching, Victory, and Sacrifice, are the perfect loving obedience to God and the perfect loving service to men rendered by him who is at once Teacher and Teaching, Victor and Victory, Priest and Sacrifice.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS[1]

IN THE IMPORTANT, and provocative, contribution which he made to *The Apostolic Ministry*, the late Bishop of Oxford, Dr Kirk, dealt briefly with the topic which I have chosen as the subject of this lecture.[2] He acclaimed 'the priesthood of all believers' as 'the decisive formula of all non-episcopal Christendom', and then went on to indicate an ambiguity that lurks in the phrase. It may mean 'the priesthood of all believers considered corporately—that is, the priesthood of the "Church" or "congregation" '. Or it 'may mean "the priesthood of each believer considered by himself" '. Dr Kirk pointed out some of the difficulties which arise on either of these interpretations, though he conceded that there is a deep truth embedded in the former of them. The difficulties mentioned by him seem to me not to lie in the conception itself, but to be created by the intrusion of another idea, that of the *Shaliach*-Apostolate, which was worked out in great detail by Dom Gregory Dix in a later chapter of the book.[3] The result is that a conflict

[1] The A. S. Peake Memorial Lecture, 1957.

[2] *The Apostolic Ministry* (1946), pp. 48-9.

[3] Chap. 4, pp. 183-303. I discussed Dix's theory in my book *The Church's Ministry* (1948), pp. 31-52.

springs up between 'the priesthood of all believers' and the apostolic or *shaliach* functions which are the exclusive concern of a limited body within the total body of believers. As these functions are taken to include everything that can fairly be called priestly, it becomes difficult to see what the priesthood of *all* believers can mean either corporately or individually; and Dr Kirk's argument moves away to other matters.

We turn to non-episcopal sources in the hope of obtaining light on this 'decisive formula of all non-episcopal Christendom'; and it must be confessed that the illumination is something less than dazzling. No doubt there are good reasons. The early Reformers were shocked and disgusted by the scandalous behaviour of large sections of the pre-Reformation priesthood, and in revolt against the tyrannical abuse of sacerdotal powers. Moreover the Reformation theology, with its tremendous emphasis on the once-for-allness and complete sufficiency of the mediatorial work of Christ, was not hospitable to the idea of mediation by priests either as a substitute for or as a supplement to what had been done by the great High Priest himself and made directly available to every believer. Thus in that famous compendium, Heinrich Heppe's *Reformed Dogmatics*,[4] the *sacerdotium* or priestly office of Christ is dealt with at length (pp. 457-81); but when we come to the constitution of the Church a sharp

[4] English translation by G. T. Thomson (1950).

distinction is drawn between the ministry and the priesthood. 'So the "ministry" is not a "priesthood", with such a power over souls that without it no one can enter into possession of saving grace; and so in the Church of the New Testament there is no opposition between priests and laymen.'[5] Whatever may have been the position in the Church

[5] *Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 673. The Helvetic Confession is quoted for the proposition that 'Priesthood and ministry are things very different from each other'; and Calvin (IV.xix.28) as saying: 'To start with it ought to be admitted that all are insulting to Christ who call themselves priests to offer the victim of appeasement. He was constituted and consecrated priest by the Father—in him we are all priests.' The nature of Christ's priesthood is defined in the *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* (Calvin: *Theological Treatises*, trans. J. K. S. Reid, *Library of Christian Classics*, Vol. XXII (1954), p. 95): 'It is the office and prerogative of presenting oneself before the face of God to obtain grace, and of offering sacrifice, which may be acceptable to him, to appease his wrath.' The view that the propitiatory sacrifice made by Christ can be in any way repeated or supplemented by priests of the Church is vigorously rejected by Calvin (*Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, op. cit. pp. 155ff). The sacrifice of Christ is unique: more than that, 'it is not to be repeated seeing that its efficacy endures always' (p. 156). 'Christ never conferred this function' (that of sacrificing) 'on the apostles, nor did he ever wish it to be undertaken by their successors' (*Necessity of Reforming the Church*, op. cit. p. 210).

Zwingli (*Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, *Library of Christian Classics*, Vol. XXIV (1953), p. 88) explains the 'royal priesthood' of 1 Peter 2[9] as meaning that 'the Lord Jesus Christ has called all Christians to kingly honour and to the priesthood, so that they do not need a sacrificing priest to offer on their behalf, for they are all priests, offering spiritual gifts, that is, dedicating themselves wholly to God'.

Luther (see Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God* (1953), pp. 315-16) appeals to 1 Peter 2[9] as proof that all baptized Christians are priests, and declares that this 'is a far greater thing than being Kings, for priesthood makes us worthy to stand before God and pray for others. For to stand before God's face is the prerogative of none except priests. Christ has so operated on us that we are able spiritually to act and pray on behalf of one another, just as the priest acts and prays bodily on behalf of the people.'

It would thus seem that the Calvinist view leaves no place in the Church for priesthood. To call the Christian Community 'a royal priesthood' is no more than to confer on its members an honorary status without any defined function. For Zwingli the Christian as priest offers himself to God: for Luther his function is that of intercession for his fellow members. The main strains of Reformation theology are not at one regarding the priesthood of believers.

of the New Testament, there could certainly be no opposition between priests and laymen in the Reformed Church, since no real place was left for priests to exist in it. In the Zwinglian ideal there is no opposition either, for there are no laymen. Every member of the Church is his own priest and his own offering. In Lutheranism also the opposition has been done away: all are priests, and the priestly task is that of intercession. The sharp contrast between Calvinism, with no priests, on the one hand and Zwinglianism and Lutheranism, with no laymen, on the other, arises from different conceptions of the priestly function. Calvin sees it as the offering of piacular sacrifice to propitiate God; as this has been done perfectly once for all by Christ, there is, strictly speaking, no place for any further priestly activity. Zwingli and Luther, with their conceptions of priesthood as the offering of gifts or intercessions, clearly leave room for Christian priesthood of some sort so long as men have gifts to offer to God or needs to be met by him. Obviously the matter cannot be allowed to rest here. There are even more ambiguities about the priesthood of all believers than the two detected by Dr Kirk, and they must be cleared up. We must discover, if we can, whether the priesthood of all believers means anything in our doctrine of the Church; and, if it has a meaning, precisely what that meaning is.

The inquiry is complicated by the fact that in

some at least of the non-episcopal communions some at least of the functions of the pre-Reformation sacerdotal caste were taken over by a new ministerial order. Under the Presbyterian system the functions of the ministers were distinctly specified: the proclamation of God's word, the administration of the sacraments, intercession for their congregations, and the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. The administration of the sacraments may be, and is, reserved to ministers exclusively.[6] Admission to the order of ministers, i.e. ordination, can be given only by those who are already in the order.[7] In contrast to this, thoroughgoing Independency can maintain the absolute right of the members of the individual congregation to choose and ordain their own minister, at the same time holding that he has no status or function in the Church which cannot be claimed in principle by any other member.

Meanwhile the episcopal communions keep the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, with the bishops and priests together exercising the ministerial priesthood as distinguished from the general priesthood of all Christians or the priesthood which belongs to the Church as a whole.[8]

[6] See, for example, the *Westminster Confession*, XXVII.iv. 'There be only two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord, in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord; neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a Minister of the word lawfully ordained.'

[7] Heppe, op. cit. p. 678.

[8] On the priesthood of all believers and its relation to the ministerial priesthood see C. Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, new ed. revised by C. H. Turner (1936), pp. 71-80. For a statement of the Roman Catholic view see J. Tixeront, *L'Ordre et les Ordinations*[2] (1925), pp. 48-52.

I do not propose to go into detail regarding these differences between episcopal and non-episcopal communions and between the various communions which go to make up the non-episcopal group. All I am concerned to do is to show that a real confusion exists in regard to priesthood and ministry, that there is an urgent need for careful study of the problems, and that such a study ought to be carried out by Free Church scholars concerned to discover what is the characteristic Free Church doctrine of the ministry—if there is such a thing as a single Free Church doctrine—and how that doctrine is related to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. It seems to me that the first essential in such an inquiry is to make clear to ourselves what we understand by the priesthood of all believers; and I would emphasize that the word that requires clarification is the word 'priesthood'.

Bishop Kirk described the priesthood of all believers as 'the decisive formula of all non-episcopal Christendom'. Certainly it has been one of the great rallying-cries of Free Churchmanship. But it may be suspected that some who use it most often and most emphatically mean by it something more like 'the priesthood of no believer whatsoever' or 'the non-priesthood of all believers'. When the priesthood of all believers is construed in this way, it can readily become the ground for rejecting altogether the idea, not only of a priestly order within the

Church, but also of any ministerial order whatever. If we stop short of this extreme conclusion, how far short do we stop? What is the position of the people whom we ordinarily regard as ministers? Are they just laymen who have lost their amateur status? Are they specially proficient laymen employed to do what the other members of the congregation are too lazy or too incompetent to do for themselves? Or do they, after all, constitute an 'order' within the Church?

It is a matter of some importance how we answer these questions, and that in two ways. First it is important where the relations between the Free Churches and the Anglican Communion are in question. If I may put the matter quite bluntly, we expect Anglicans to 'recognize' Free Church ministries; but it is idle to expect them to give higher recognition to Free Church ministers than the Free Churches themselves give. They may well ask whether 'mutual recognition' means that they are to take as high a view of Free Church ministries as they do of their own, or to take as low a view of their own ministries as some Free Churchmen apparently do of theirs. (The words 'high' and 'low' are here used in the ecclesiastical sense.) This point must be pressed farther and we in the Free Churches must put up with any discomfort involved. Either there is a real and significant difference between ministers and laymen or there is not. If there is no difference, then there is no point

in maintaining the ministry as a separate institution, and everything to be said for adopting the kind of ecclesiastical organization which the Society of Friends, during some three centuries now, has shown to be workable. If there is a difference, we must know what it is; and I suggest that the proper place at which to investigate is the place where the words priest and priesthood are relevant. In what sense are all believers priests; and in what special sense, if any, are the ordained ministers of the Church priests; and how are the two senses, if there are two, related to one another?

Milton at the end of a scurrilous sonnet '*On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament*' has the oft-quoted line:

New Presbyter is but *Old Priest* writ large.

It has to be added that 'Old Priest' was but *still older Presbyter* writ small, a fact which seems to me to have some very important implications. It is a strange and, I think, significant fact that our word 'priest' is in its origin an administrative rather than a sacerdotal term. In this it is no different from the other official designations of the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons; or Church-superintendents (ἐπίσκοποι), Church-senators or aldermen (πρεσβύτεροι) and Church-servants (διάκονοι). The sacerdotal words were available, *kōhēn* in Hebrew, ἱερεύς in Greek, and *sacerdos* in Latin; and the Greek and Latin words were certainly used

to describe the two upper ranks of the ministry;[9] *but they did not become the names of those orders.* This strongly suggests that whatever analogies might be drawn between the Christian ministry and the Jerusalem Temple hierarchy, the essential character of priesthood as a Christian institution was derived from and determined by the actual functions of the presbyters, and in particular by the part they took in the eucharistic worship of the Church.[10] One of their principal duties here was to 'offer the gifts'

[9] So in the liturgies we find ἀρχιερεύς and *summus sacerdos* for the bishop, ἱερεύς and *sacerdos* for the presbyter. The use of *summus sacerdos* for the bishop can be traced back to Origen, Hippolytus, and Tertullian (see A. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession* (1953), p. 107, note 4). The interesting thing is that while Hippolytus (*Apost. Trad.*, iii.4) speaks of the bishop officiating as high priest, he does not describe the presbyters as priests, and states explicitly (ix.2) that the deacon is not ordained for a priesthood (*non in sacerdotio ordinatur*). Similarly Tertullian (*de baptismo*, xvii.1) says that the right to administer baptism belongs in the first instance to the high priest, that is, the bishop, if present (*summum habet ius summus sacerdos, si qui est, episcopus*). Failing him it falls to the presbyters (*presbyteri*, not *sacerdotes*) and deacons. It would seem that the equation ἀρχιερεύς = ἐπίσκοπος was made—by Tertullian (?) or earlier (?)—before the equation πρεσβύτερος = ἱερεύς. The latter is found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, II.xxvi.3 (Funk, p. 103): οὗτοι (the bishops) γάρ εἰσιν ὑμῶν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς· οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς ὑμῶν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, καὶ οἱ λευῖται ὑμῶν οἱ νῦν διάκονοι . . . καὶ αἱ χῆραι καὶ αἱ παρθένοι καὶ οἱ ὀρφανοὶ ὑμῶν. Cf. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. R. H. Connolly, pp. 86-7: 'For they are your high priests; but the priests and Levites now are the presbyters and deacons, and the orphans and widows.' So the Syriac: the Latin has: '*Isti enim primi sacerdotes uestri. Qui tunc erant Lenitae, modo sunt diacones, praesbyteri, uiduae et orfani.*' Earlier (Connolly, p. 80) the Syriac *Didascalia* equates the bishops with priests and prophets. So also *Const. Apost.*, II.xxv.7 (Funk, p. 95.) In Eus. *H.E.*, x.4.2, the assembled clergy are addressed as ἱερεῖς. The *Didache* takes a line of its own in equating Christian prophets with high priests (xiii.3).

[10] In the *Apostolic Tradition* (iii.4) the bishop exercises high-priestly functions which are further particularized in these terms: 'that he may minister blamelessly by night and day, that he may unceasingly propitiate thy countenance, and offer to thee the gifts of thy holy Church.' In 1 *Clem.* 44 the Corinthian Church is told that 'our sin is not small, if we cast out those who have offered the gifts of the bishops' office unblameably and holily'. The writer then goes on to speak of the good fortune of those presbyters who died before such wrongs could be done to them.

(προσφέρειν τὰ δῶρα). Lightfoot, in a valuable note on 1 *Clem.* 44, discusses what is meant by offering the gifts and in what sense the presbyters might be said to perform this office.[11] His conclusion is that 'they led the prayers and thanksgivings of the congregation, they presented the alms and contributions to God and asked His blessing on them in the name of the whole body'. The contributions include the eucharistic elements.

When we push our inquiries back into the New Testament we are at once confronted by the striking fact that in the fairly comprehensive catalogues of Church activities given in 1 Corinthians 12^{28-30} and Ephesians 4^{11-12} there is no mention of priests. One is tempted to conclude that at this stage in the history of the Christian community there was no room for a regular priesthood, *as priesthood was understood at that time.*[12] On the contrary, for the Palestinian Church, which accepted the Old Testament as authoritative, the words 'He is a priest' meant and could only mean: 'He is a male member of one of the existing Jewish priestly families.' In the strict sense of the word neither Paul nor any of his Gentile converts could ever be priests. Nor could Peter or James the Lord's

[11] *The Apostolic Fathers*, I.ii (1890), 134-5.

[12] It is significant in this connexion that when we are told in Acts 6^{7} that a great multitude of the priests adhered to the new faith, there is no suggestion that they became the priests of the new community. (Reading ἱερέων with most witnesses and editors against Ἰουδαίων, which is defended by Zahn, *Grundriss der Gesch. des Apost. Zeitalters* (1929), p. 15.) The contrast here between the Jewish Christian community and that of Qumran is striking.

brother or any of the Twelve. Further, priestly functions, as defined in the authoritative Bible of the primitive Church could be discharged only in the Temple at Jerusalem; and their nature was strictly defined by the Old Testament laws and the existing liturgical practice. The priestly converts described in Acts 6[7] became Christians; if they continued to exercise their priestly functions it could only be as Jewish priests carrying out the Jewish ritual in the Jewish Temple.

When we turn to the Gospels we find that Jesus makes no use of the ideas of priesthood. He lays no claim to the title of priest for himself nor does he confer it on his disciples. In his parables the imagery is not taken from the Temple and its ritual, but from ordinary life.[13] Those who came into contact with him might think of him as prophet, or rabbi, or even Messiah. They did not think of him in terms of priesthood. In first-century Palestine this was perfectly natural. Jesus was regarded as the son of Joseph; and, as Joseph was not a priest, neither was his son.

We might think that this ended the matter. If the priestly idea played no part in the thought and activity of Jesus or in the life of the early Church, may we not dismiss it as a later and irrelevant intrusion into Christian doctrine and practice? There are, however, a number of considerations

[13] G. Schrenk in *Th.Wb.*, III.263. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican is no exception, for in it the Temple does no more than provide the setting for the private prayers of the two men.

which may make us think twice before taking so drastic a step.

First, it is true enough that Jesus was not a priest and did not claim to be one. It is true that he does not use the Temple ritual in his positive teaching. On the other hand he did think of the Temple as the natural place for men to go and worship God, as is shown by the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican; and he did take active steps, in the Cleansing of the Temple, to ensure that the Court of the Gentiles should be, in fact as well as in theory, a place of prayer for all nations. Moreover in the earliest days of the Jerusalem Church the Temple was one of their regular meeting-places, and that for participation in its worship as well as for their own propaganda.[14]

Secondly, it is true that Jesus was not a priest and did not pretend to be one; but this means no more than that he did not belong to the official hierarchy. He was not in a position to pose as a rival to Annas or Caiaphas; but would he have wanted to, even if he had been qualified by birth? Messiahship for him did not mean challenging Tiberius, or Herod

[14] Acts 2^{46}, 3^{1}, $5^{21\text{-}6.\,42}$, $21^{17\text{-}26}$. The last passage is very instructive. St Paul is in Jerusalem for the Jewish Feast of Weeks (Acts 20^{16}). Four members of the Jerusalem community are under a Nazirite vow and are about to go through the ritual connected with the termination of the obligation. St Paul is induced to join with them in these ceremonies and to defray the cost of the necessary sacrifices. In Acts 3^{1} Peter and John go up to the Temple at the hour of prayer, i.e. about 3 p.m. The prayer in question is the prayer preceding the afternoon sacrifice (I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdiens*[2] (1924), p. 238); and it seems open to us to suppose that the two Apostles did not make any sharp dissociation of the prayers from the sacrifice which followed.

Antipas for that matter, to a battle for royal power. Being called 'Rabbi' and 'Teacher' did not suggest to him that he should set up a rival establishment to the Schools of Hillel and Shammai. If we allow that Jesus the Messiah was concerned with a real kingship different from that of the Roman Emperor or the Herodian princelings, and that Jesus the Teacher had access to truth hidden from the Scribes, we may well consider the possibility that his ministry was priestly in a way of which the Temple dignitaries had no inkling.

Thirdly, if we think of our Lord's ministry in this way, we shall find that we are not without precedents from the earliest times. Looking back on what had been accomplished, early Christians found the appropriate words to describe it in the terminology of the sacrificial cultus. St Paul could speak of Christ as the Passover lamb that had been sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5^{7}). In Ephesians 5^{2} he exhorts his readers to live in love as Christ loved them and gave himself up on their behalf as an offering and sacrifice whose fragrance is pleasing to God. In the Apocalypse (5^{6}) the exalted Christ appears to the Seer as a lamb slain in sacrifice. Again in the words of Institution of the Lord's Supper as given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul there is a reference to a covenant and to blood that is being shed in connexion with it. Here it would seem that Jesus himself compares himself with the Passover Lamb.[15]

[15] See J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (1955), pp. 146ff.

But it is hardly possible to think of the death of Christ as a sacrifice without thinking of it as a self-sacrifice, that is, as an offering made to God in which priest and victim are identical.

This decisive step is taken by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who works out the idea of Christ as high priest in connexion with the ritual of the Day of Atonement,[16] and gives what may be described as a Christian doctrine of piacular sacrifice to take the place of its Jewish counterpart. We may, I hope, venture to think that this is a legitimate way of interpreting the work of Christ without being accused of obscurantism. Admittedly it is not the only possible way; the primitive kerygma, the developed Pauline theology, and the Johannine exposition have their own characteristic viewpoints and emphases. None of them exhausts the significance of Christ; and it may be claimed that the author of Hebrews makes a unique and precious contribution to the total picture. If that is so, his work is of primary importance for our understanding of the meaning of priesthood in the Christian dispensation; and we shall have to return to it again and again.

Along with the high-priesthood of Christ, the New Testament offers the priesthood of Christians. It is true that Jesus does not call his disciples priests; but he does call them to share in the kind of

[16] In this line of thought I think he was anticipated by St Paul in Romans 3^{21-6}. See my article on ἱλαστήριον in *JTS*, XLVI (1945), pp. 1-10.

self-sacrifice which makes it appropriate to use the term high-priesthood of his own ministry. And in the primitive Church we find the ideas and the terminology of priesthood applied to the life and behaviour of Christians. St Paul calls upon the readers of the Epistle to the Romans (12[1]), which I think went to other places besides Rome, to offer their bodies (i.e. themselves) to God as a living sacrifice (*θυσίαν ζῶσαν*) dedicated and fit for his acceptance. This offering is the proper worship of creatures endowed with hearts and minds (*λογικὴ λατρεία*). In Philippians 3[3] he claims that as Christians 'we possess the true *περιτομή*, the circumcision not of the flesh but of the heart, and we also offer the true *λατρεία*, the service not of external rites but of a spiritual worship'.[17] Earlier in the same epistle (2[17]) he speaks of his being poured as a libation on 'the sacrifice and service of the Philippians' faith'.[18]

[17] J. B. Lightfoot, *ad loc.*, who points out that 'the terms *λατρεία*, *λατρεύειν*, had got to be used in a very special sense to denote the service rendered to Jehovah by the Israelite race, as his peculiar people': see especially Rom 9[4], Acts 26[7]; comp. Heb 9[1,6]. (For our present purpose it is not necessary in Phil 3[3] to decide between the readings *θεοῦ* and *θεῷ* or that of P[46] omitting both and adding *ἐν* before *πνεύματι*.)

[18] The wording is not entirely unambiguous. Is the genitive subjective so that the service and sacrifice are the expression of the faith of the Philippian Christians? Or should we not rather interpret the clause in the light of Rom 15[16]? In that case *πίστις* will mean the act of believing, i.e. becoming and being a Christian. In Rom 12[1] St Paul exhorts his readers to present themselves as a living sacrifice to God. This offering is described as a *λογικὴ λατρεία*, on which see the notes on *Corp. Herm.* I.31 in the editions of W. Scott and Nock-Festugière. Christians are the acceptable sacrifice to God. In Rom 15[16] the Apostle makes this more explicit. He himself is a minister of Jesus Christ, exercising priestly functions in the service of the Gospel of God. The offering (*προσφορά*) which he presents to God is his Gentile converts in their submission

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the author speaks of the duty of Christians to offer acceptable service,[19] and goes on to define the nature of the offering. 'Through him (Christ) let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the tribute of lips that acknowledge his name. And do not neglect to do good deeds and to share good things, for these are the sacrifices in which God takes pleasure' (Heb 13^{15-16}).

The most explicit statement of the priesthood of believers is found in 1 Peter and Revelation. In 1 Peter 2^{5} Christians are described as 'a holy priesthood' whose function it is 'to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'. A little later, in verse 9, they are called 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood,[20] a consecrated nation, and a people claimed by God as his own, to publish the achievements of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light'. In the Apocalypse (1^{5-6}) we have an ascription in these terms: 'To him who loves us, and has set us free from our sins at the cost of his life,[21] and made us a kingdom,

to the Gospel (*ὑπακοὴ ἐθνῶν*, 15^{18}). This offering consecrated by the Holy Spirit is acceptable to God. In view of these passages it may be permissible to understand Phil 2^{17} as meaning that St Paul regards his converts at Philippi and their conversion as the sacrificial offering made to God and acceptable in his eyes, and his own outpouring of his whole life in the service of the Gospel as the libation which accompanies that offering.

[19] *λατρεύωμεν εὐαρέστως τῷ θεῷ* (12^{28}).

[20] Or, if Dr E. G. Selwyn (*Comm., ad loc.*) is right in taking *βασίλειον* as a substantive, 'a dwelling-place for the (heavenly) King, a priesthood'.

[21] Lit. 'in his blood'. Misunderstanding of the Hebraic idiom here led to the corruption *λούσαντι* for *λύσαντι*. See R. H. Charles, *ad loc.*

priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and might for ever and ever.' In 1^{10} similar praises are sung in a hymn to Christ, and Christians are described in similar terms as 'a kingdom and priests'. In 20^{6} it is said of the faithful that 'they will be priests of God and the Messiah, and will reign with him for a thousand years' (or 'for the Millennium').

These passages ultimately derive from Exodus 19^{5-6}, where the Lord says to Israel: 'Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests[22] and a holy nation.' In dealing with the expression 'a kingdom of priests' we must be careful to distinguish between what it means in its original context and what it may have been taken to mean in later times. In its original context it points to a state of affairs still to be realized, and realized only on conditions. If, and

[22] מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים. LXX renders 19^{6} *ὑμεῖς δὲ ἔσεσθέ μοι βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον.* From the evidence of the Syro-Hexaplar it can be inferred that Aquila gave a literal rendering of the Hebrew, *βασιλεία ἱερέων*, and that Symmachus and Theodotion had something like *βασιλεία ἱερεῖς*. The *Targum of Ongelos* has: 'And you shall be before me kings, priests, and a holy people.' *Targ Jon:* 'And you shall be before me kings wearing the crown and officiating priests and a holy people.' The *Palestinian Targum* (ed. P. Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens*, Vol. II (1930), p. 56): 'And you shall be for my name kings and priests and a holy people.' *The Peshitta* (ed. W. E. Barnes) has 'kingdom and priests' and the Armenian and Sahidic 'kingdom and priesthood'. The Bohairic renders by 'holy kingdom' and the Old Latin by *regnum sacratissimum.* These variations of rendering are reflected in the New Testament texts. 1 Peter 2^{9} agrees with the LXX in reading *βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα.* Rev 1^{6}, *βασιλείαν ἱερεῖς*, corresponds to the text attributed to Theodotion and Symmachus. Rev 5^{10} *βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς* agrees with the *Peshitta* of Exod 19^{6}, while the variants at Rev 5^{10} show agreement with the Sahidic and Armenian or with the *Targums.*

only if, you are obedient, you will be to me a kingdom of priests. In the plain meaning of the words a kingdom of priests will be a community ruled over by a king—God in person or his anointed vicegerent—in which all the subjects are priests. But the plain meaning was automatically excluded when an exclusive priestly caste was established in fact, and confirmed in its rights and privileges by the legislation of the Priestly Code.

We must therefore ask what the priesthood of *all* Israelites could mean in the early centuries of the first millennium B C. We think most naturally of the offering of sacrifice as the characteristic priestly function; but against this it must be borne in mind that originally the head of any family in Israel could sacrifice in somewhat the same way that the head of any Christian household can conduct family worship.[23] Further, the earliest records make it clear that priests in Israel had as perhaps their primary task the receiving, transmitting, preserving and interpreting of divine revelation. They were the custodians of the Law of God. So in the 'Blessing of Moses' we read:

And of Levi he said,
'Give to Levi thy Thummim,
and thy Urim to thy godly one,
whom thou didst test at Massah,
with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;

[23] W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Vol. I (1933), p. 211; G. Schrenk in *Th.Wb.*, III.260.

who said of his father and mother,
"I regard them not";
he disowned his brothers
and ignored his children.
For they observed thy word
and kept thy covenant.
They shall teach Jacob thy ordinances,
and Israel thy law;
they shall put incense before thee
and whole burnt offering upon thy altar.'

Deut 33[8-10]

Here it is significant that the order in which the priestly functions and privileges are set out is (1) the custody and operation of the apparatus for obtaining oracles by means of the sacred lot; (2) the custody, interpretation, and application of the Torah of Yahweh; (3) certain sacrificial functions. It is abundantly clear that, as Buchanan Gray put it: 'Priests were from the first, and most conspicuously in the earlier periods, recipients, organs of revelation.'[24]

The establishment of special centres of ritual worship, and in particular the establishment of royal sanctuaries, led to the establishment of a regular priesthood largely occupied with the due performance of the liturgical offices. Josiah's reforms in the last quarter of the seventh century strengthened this tendency, so that the Torah took second place to the

[24] *Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (1925), p. 200. Cf. Eichrodt, op. cit. pp. 209-14; H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* (1956), p. 37.

sacrificial ritual. During the Exile the Priests' Code established the exclusive rights of the priesthood in cult matters, at any rate on paper. This *de jure* status of the priests was translated into fact under Ezra. The Torah became more and more the concern of the Scribes, who, as specialists in this matter, gradually took over the custody, study, and application of the Law. At the same time the upper ranks of the Jerusalem hierarchy acquired and retained large executive and juridical powers in the period after the Exile; and the High Priest was *ex officio* the president of the Jewish supreme court in Jerusalem. We should not, however, look to these ecclesiastical potentates for the pattern of Jewish priesthood at the beginning of the Christian era, but rather to the great multitude of rank-and-file priests, of whom Zacharias the father of John the Baptist may be taken as a good sample. Such a man exercised his priesthood mainly, if not exclusively, by coming into residence at Jerusalem for the great festivals and for one week in every twenty-four with his 'course' or priestly division.[25] His priestly functions on these occasions were primarily concerned with the sacrificial ritual. Thus, whatever priesthood may have meant in earlier days, in New Testament times it is chiefly associated with the offering of sacrifice to God.

When, therefore, the terms of priesthood are applied to Christ and Christians, it is of sacrifices

[25] This is only a very rough statement: for a full discussion of the working of the priestly rota system see Billerbeck, II.55-68.

offered to God that we are to think. Scholars who have investigated the Hebrew ideas of sacrifice have tended to find three main lines of interpretation : the sacrifice may be thought of as a sacred meal which the worshippers share with their God,[26] or as a gift which they offer to God,[27] or as a means for creating or repairing good relations between God and his people, whether by placating his wrath or by removing from them the taint of sin. The view which I find, on the whole, the most convincing is that which treats as fundamental the creation or re-creation of right relations between God and man, and regards the sacred meal or the gift as means to this end or outward expressions of its achievement. The matter is admirably put by Pedersen : 'Whatever the view taken of sacrifice it always contained germs of what developed into the idea of atonement. The worshipper purified himself and was sanctified by the sacrifice, he presented a gift to the God, he partook of a meal with the God ; in all cases a new peace was created for him through the sacrifice, a renewal of harmony. But man could only be in harmony with God when he was "whole". The sacrifice removed whatever was wasting away his integrity, what was called sin. This was brought about by man being sanctified while at the same time God was induced to be lenient toward him.'[28]

[26] See for example W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites.*

[27] This concept of sacrifice is fully worked out by G. B. Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament.*

[28] *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, III-IV.359.

It is this piacular aspect of sacrifice that is to the forefront in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is no accident that the main argument of the epistle is concentrated on the ritual of the Day of Atonement, a ritual which, more than any other in the Jewish calendar, was concerned with the restoration of right relations between God and Israel. It is no accident that the high-priesthood of Christ is connected with the one Temple service at which the high-priest was bound to officiate. Beneath all the liturgical elaboration of the piacular rites it is possible to discern two relatively simple ideas: (*a*) that what we call sin has the double result of arousing the wrath of God and 'wasting away the integrity' of the sinner; and (*b*) that, consequently, any effective *piaculum* must appease the wrath of God and remove the infection from the sinner. The sacrifices offered in the piacular ritual may accordingly be thought of both as compensatory offerings made to God and as a means of expiation for the offerer, a means to cover up or wipe away that in the sinner which makes him obnoxious to God and to all his right-thinking and well-behaved fellows. This framework of Jewish ideas is taken over in the Epistle to the Hebrews and filled in with specifically Christian content, in that the compensatory offering to God and the expiating power for man are both found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

More than that, the fact that the effective piacular offering is a self-offering means that under the new

dispensation Christ is both sacrifice and high-priest.

In the opening verses of Hebrews 5 we have a portrayal of the Jewish ideal of high-priesthood: 'Every high-priest, chosen as he is from among men, is appointed to represent them in matters for which they are answerable to God,[29] to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; and he is able to deal gently with the ignorant and erring since he too is beset by weakness. For this reason he must make sin-offerings for himself just as he does for the people. And no one arrogates the office to himself: rather one is called by God as Aaron was.'

The discrepancies between this ideal picture and the reality in first-century Jerusalem are notorious. The high-priests of this period were the creatures of the civil power rather than the called of God; and this was reflected in the fact that installation was by investiture rather than anointing. So far from dealing gently with the ignorant and erring, the high-priests and their Sadducean supporters were notorious for their harshness and severity in judgement.[30]

[29] The expression *τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν* occurs here and in 2^{17}; also in Rom 15^{17}. In all three cases, and in Acts 24^{16}, the idea involved in *πρός* is that of responsibility or answerability to God (or man) for one's behaviour. If one's performance is good, one has a good conscience or a *καύχησις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*: if it is bad, there is need for expiation. In both the Hebrew passages men are answerable to God for their misdeeds and require the services of a high-priest to put matters right. This sense of *πρός* may be illustrated from the 'Eumeneian formula': *ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεόν*, 'he will be answerable to God'. (See W. M. Calder in *Anatolian Studies presented to W. H. Buckler* (1939), pp. 15-26.)

[30] *Ps. Sol.* 4^{1-3}; Jos. *Ant.* xx.9.1 § 199; cf. xiii.10.6 § 294; *b. Pes.* 57^{a}, quoted J. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 337, and J. Bonsirven, *Textes Rabbiniques*, § 834, p. 206; cf. *T. Men.* xiii.21 (Zuckermandel, p. 533), quoted Billerbeck, II.570.

Indeed the Rabbinic testimony suggests that brutality would not be too strong a word to describe the attitude of the high-priestly caste to the common people.

For the author of Hebrews the high-priestly ideal is fulfilled, not by the ecclesiastical potentates of Jerusalem, but by the high-priest 'after the order of Melchizedek', of whom he says that 'he had to be made like his brethren in all respects so as to be a merciful and faithful high-priest in matters for which they were answerable to God, to expiate the sins of the people. For as he himself has suffered under trials, he is able to help those who are undergoing trials' (Heb 2^{17-18}). This latter point is further stressed in 4^{15} where we are told that 'we do not have a high-priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tried and tested in every respect as we are, yet is free from sin'.

Here we have the essential characteristics of a perfect high-priesthood: on the one side an unbreakable link with God the Father in the unfailing obedience of the Son; on the other an unbreakable link with his brother men through an unfailing sympathy and understanding. This solidarity with God and man uniquely fits Christ to be the Mediator, to represent God to men and men to God, to make the Holy One of Israel real to his children and to fit those sinful children to enter into the divine presence.

The means by which this is effected is a sacrifice.

And here it is necessary to remind ourselves—we cannot do it too often—that sacrifice in the Bible is a *religious* act, and that we shall never come to its deepest significance by bringing in ideas derived from the theory and practice of Western criminal law. The main points made in Hebrews are these. (*a*) Christ the high-priest sacrifices himself, the perfect priest making the unblemished offering.[31] (*b*) This sacrificial act, in sharp contrast to the continually repeated ceremonies of the Temple ritual, takes place once for all. It is unique and unrepeatable.[32] (*c*) At the same time the sacrifice is not to be thought of merely as an isolated event which occupied a few hours of historical time in the first third of the first century of our era. The priesthood of Christ is an eternal priesthood. In the constant references to Psalm 110 and the priesthood 'after the order of Melchizedek' the emphasis is laid on the phrase 'priest for ever' (Heb 6^{20}, $7^{3, 17, 21, 24-5, 28}$). The offering, once made, is perpetually effective and constantly operative.[33] (*d*) This is borne out by a consideration of the nature of the sacrifice as it is described in Hebrews. It has the twofold character

[31] Heb 7^{26-7}: ἑαυτὸν ἀνενέγκας. 9^{14}: διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ. Cf. 9^{11}, 10^{10}.

[32] Heb 7^{27}, 9^{24-8}, 10^{10-14}. Cf. Schrenk in *Th.Wb.* III.281-2.

[33] There is a striking contrast between the sacrifices of the old dispensation which are offered year in year out, perpetually (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές), but never make perfect those who draw near (10^{1}) and the high-priestly work of Christ who offers the one sacrifice for sins and takes his permanent (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές) seat at God's right hand, having by the one offering made perfect in perpetuity (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές) those who are being sanctified.

which belongs to piacular sacrifice in the Jewish ritual: it is an *'āshām*, a compensatory offering to God for wrongs done; and it is also a means of expiation whereby the things in man which make it impossible for him to come into God's presence are removed or neutralized. These two aspects call for further clarification.

First, with regard to the compensatory offering for wrong done we must ask what is the nature of the wrong. And from end to end of the Old Testament (Gen 3^{11}, Mal $3^{7, 18}$) the answer is in one word—disobedience. For this disobedience no material gift can compensate. The only possible offering for disobedience is total obedience. This, as the author of Hebrews saw, had already been stated in the fortieth Psalm. There we read (verses 6-8; M.T. 7-9):

Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire;
but thou hast given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not required.
Then I said, 'Lo, I come;
in the roll of the book it is written of me;
I delight to do thy will, O my God;
thy law is within my heart.'

In Hebrews this passage, in a form nearer to the Septuagint version, which differs in some particulars from the Hebrew, is put into the mouth of Christ. 'Therefore, as he comes into the world he says:

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but a body hast thou prepared for me. In whole burnt offerings and sin offerings thou didst take no pleasure. Then I said, Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God (10^{5-7}). This total obedience supersedes the existing sacrificial ritual. It reaches its uniquely perfect expression in 'the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (10^{10}) at Jerusalem on an April day probably in A D 30 or 33 ; but it is not exhausted in the events of those few hours. For it is of the essence of obedience that it is a continuing state; and Christ offered not merely his own obedience achieved in the life and work portrayed in the Gospels, but also proleptically the obedience of all those who should be united to him. 'By a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified' (10^{14} ; cf 10^{10}). This can be put in another way by saying in words borrowed from Jeremiah : 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord : I will put my laws in their hearts and write them on their minds' (10^{16}) —a vivid way of saying that obedience to God's will is to become second nature to men.

The other aspect of Christ's sacrifice of himself is the expiatory, its effect on sinful men. The basis of everything that Hebrews has to say on this matter is the complete solidarity of Christ with his brethren. This solidarity is described in terms of sympathy and clemency, understanding of their weakness and

leniency toward their failures. It finds its complete and, if the word may be allowed, definitive expression on the Cross. There the blood of the high-priest-victim is shed to cleanse us to the very roots of our personality (9^{13-14}) to wipe out the past and give a new beginning ($9^{22, 26}$) and so to inaugurate a new People of God living under the New Covenant (9^{15-28}).

We are not to understand this in any crudely materialistic way that would turn the blood of Christ's sacrifice into a magical fluid; and equally we are not to reduce the statements of the text to so much pious rhetoric showing how the good behaviour of Christ may encourage us to behave better ourselves. The fact is that our Lord's identification of himself with men and women in the day-to-day carrying out of his ministry involved a constant expenditure of vital force. The story of the woman with the issue of blood is particularly instructive on this point. Her cure was only effected at the cost of a part of Jesus' vital force. By Hebrew ways of thinking the vital force is in the blood and the sacrificial shedding of blood is the release of that power. If we say that Christ shed his blood, gave his life, for men, we are saying something that is simply and literally true; and the standing miracle is that this surrendered life proves to have inexhaustible power to cleanse and rehabilitate sinful men and women from that day to this. Expiation is effected by surrendered life; surrendered life is the concrete

expression of true sympathy and understanding; true sympathy and understanding are the fruits of divine love. These things reached their consummation on the first Good Friday; but they were not exhausted then. They continue in perpetuity.

The high-priesthood of Christ can now be defined as his complete self-dedication in unreserved obedience to God his Father and in unlimited love and compassion toward men his brethren. This conception must be normative for any Christian doctrine of priesthood and sacrifice; and it is obvious that priesthood so defined is something in which all believers can and, indeed, must have part. Moreover we must maintain that it is a real and effective part. It will not do to create artificial distinctions between the self-sacrifice of Christ and the self-sacrifice of Christians. For obedience is one and indivisible; love is one and indivisible; compassion is one and indivisible. We conserve the uniqueness of the high-priesthood of Christ, not by shutting it away in splendid isolation, but by declaring and demonstrating its power to create and comprehend in itself a true priesthood of believers, whose priestly service is taken up into and made part of his supreme sacrifice.

This may be expressed in another way if we think in terms of the Church as the Body of Christ. It is an understood thing in the sacrificial regulations of the Bible that what may be called the matter of a sacrifice is the body and blood of the victim. At the

Last Supper our Lord speaks of the impending sacrifice of his own body and blood. Twenty or twenty-five years later St Paul exhorts Christians to offer their bodies to God as a living sacrifice (Rom 12^{1}). There are other places where similar ideas are expressed.[34] The priesthood of believers means each believer offering his own body: it also means Christ the high-priest offering his body, the Church. These two aspects of the one perpetual offering may be distinguished in thought: they cannot be separated in fact.

We may conclude, then, that the priesthood of all believers lies in the fact that each believer offers himself as a sacrifice according to the pattern laid down by Christ; and—what is equally essential—that all these individual offerings are taken up into the one perpetual offering made by the one eternal high-priest of the New Covenant.

The conception of the believers as a priesthood persists in the early Church.[35] Thus Justin Martyr in the *Dialogue with Trypho* (§ 116.3) claims that Christians are now 'God's true high-priestly race, as God himself witnesses when he says that in every place among the gentiles men are bringing acceptable and pure sacrifices to him' (cf. Mal. 1^{11}). But God does not accept sacrifices from anyone except through his priests. In § 41.3 he identifies the sacrifices in question with the bread of the Eucharist

[34] E.g. 2 Cor 4^{10}, Col 1^{24-5}.
[35] For a summary statement see G. Schrenk in *Th.Wb.* III.284.

and the cup of the Eucharist; and in § 117.1 he gives a somewhat different turn to his explanation by speaking of the sacrifices for which Jesus the Messiah made Christians responsible, namely at the thanksgiving of the bread and the cup.[36] Before Justin the text of Malachi, the Eucharist, and the Christians' sacrifice had been brought together in the *Didache*.[37] Later Irenaeus declares that all the righteous are of priestly rank.[38] Tertullian holds that despite the distinction made in the Church between clerics and laymen, the laymen are nevertheless priests.[39] Clement of Alexandria speaks of prayer as 'the best and holiest of sacrifices when joined with righteousness' and goes on to say: 'At any rate our altar here on earth is the congregation of those who are devoted to the prayers, having, as it were, one common voice and one mind.' Later he adds: 'The Church's sacrifice is indeed speech rising, like incense, from holy souls, while every thought of the heart is laid open to God along with

[36] Commenting on this passage Lukyn Williams (*Justin Martyr: the Dialogue with Trypho* (1930), 241) remarks that Justin 'does not say that the Eucharist itself is a sacrifice. He means the prayers, the acts of charity, and the consecration of oneself.'

[37] *Did.* xiv.

[38] *Adv. Haer.* IV.xvii (Harvey, ii.167): *Omnes enim iusti sacerdotalem habent ordinem.*

[39] *Exh. ad Cast.* 7, *nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus.* This tract, however, belongs to his Montanist period. Cf. *De Orat.* 28, where he argues from Joh 4^{23-4} that Christians 'are the true worshippers and the true priests (*ueri adoratores et ueri sacerdotes*), who praying in the Spirit, in the Spirit offer a sacrifice of prayer as an oblation which is God's own and is well pleasing to him'. It has, however, to be remembered that Tertullian can use the word *sacerdos* in a metaphorical or spiritual way, not necessarily implying that the persons of whom it is used are clerics. Cf. G. F. Diercks's edition of the *De Orat.* (Bussum, 1947), p. 280.

the sacrifice.'[40] Origen, in the *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, connects the priesthood of believers with loyalty to the Faith under persecution. 'Just as the high-priest, Jesus Christ, offered himself in sacrifice, so the priests, whose high-priest he is, offer themselves in sacrifice and therefore appear by the altar in their proper place. Those priests who are blameless and offer blameless sacrifices used to serve the worship of God; but those who were at fault, as Moses set out in Leviticus, were banished from the altar. Who then is the blameless priest who offers a blameless offering other than he who holds fast the confession and fulfils every requirement made by the doctrine of martyrdom?'[41]

It is not for our present purposes necessary to pursue this matter farther; we can already see two tendencies beginning to appear. In one case all believers are priests and what they offer in sacrifice is themselves: in the other the sacrifice is the Eucharist; and, in so far as the celebration of the Eucharist is or becomes the function of a particular person or group of persons in the local Church, the celebrant or celebrants will be the priest or priests of the community. The former tendency finds strong expression in the passage just quoted from Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom;* the latter is

[40] *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis*, ed. Hort and Mayor, pp. 53ff. It is noteworthy that here Christians are thought of as the altar rather than as the priesthood.

[41] *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, § 30, trans. H. Chadwick. *Library of Christian Classics*, II.413. Cf. *De Orat.* xxviii.9, trans. J. E. L. Oulton, *op. cit.* pp. 309-10.

formulated with equal force in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus[42] and comes to be the dominant tendency in the later development of ecclesiastical doctrine on the Sacraments and priesthood. From the fourth century onward the Eucharist is often spoken of as 'the unbloody sacrifice'.[43]

Along with the idea of the Eucharist as a sacrifice goes the idea that the minister of the Eucharist is the priest. By the end of the second century the minister *par excellence* of the Eucharist, the bishop, is described by Tertullian as high-priest (*summus*

[42] Pt I, sections iii and iv. Ed. Dix, pp. 4-9; ed. Botte, pp. 27-33. In the consecration prayer for the Bishop he is described as chosen to serve as God's high-priest (*primatum sacerdotii tibi exhibere*; Greek ἀρχιερατεύειν σοι) and to offer the gifts of God's holy Church. In the eucharistic prayer the celebrant says 'we offer to thee the bread and the cup giving thanks to thee that thou hast deemed us worthy to stand before thee and minister to thee'.

[43] According to Gregory Dix the first writer to use the phrase 'to mean the specifically eucharistic offering of the consecrated bread and cup' is Cyril of Jerusalem (see *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 166). Cyril (*Cat. Myst.* v.8) calls the consecrated elements τὴν πνευματικὴν θυσίαν, τὴν ἀναίμακτον λατρείαν, and speaks of making intercessions for church and world ἐπὶ τῆς θυσίας ἐκείνης τοῦ ἱλασμοῦ (ed. Reischl and Rupp, Vol. II (1860), p. 384). In the same address (§ 19) the celebrant is described simply as ὁ ἱερεύς. In the *Apostolic Constitutions*, II.xxv.7 (ed. Funk, 94-7), in an expansion of the corresponding passage in the *Didascalia*, we are told that the bishops offer to God τὰς λογικὰς καὶ ἀναιμάκτους θυσίας διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου ἀρχιερέως. Cf. VI.xxiii.5 (Funk, 361ff). In VIII.v.7 in an expanded version of the consecration prayer for a bishop given in the *Apostolic Tradition* one of the episcopal functions is to offer the καθαρὰν καὶ ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν which God ordained through Christ. In VIII.xlvi.15 the Apostles describe themselves as offering this 'pure and unbloody sacrifice'. Funk (pp. 94ff) gives further references to Eusebius. See also Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, pp. 46f, 446, 507; and *Sacramentarium Serapionis* xiii.11 (Funk, ii.174). The ministers of this 'unbloody sacrifice' are called ἡ σεμνή τε καὶ ἀναίμακτος ἱερωσύνη by Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat.Cat.* xviii (ed. J. H. Srawley, pp. 75-6).

At an earlier date the expression ἀναίμακτος θυσία is found in Athenagoras, *Suppl.* xiii (ed. J. Geffcken *Zwei Griech. Apolog.*, 130); but there the reference is not to the eucharistic rite but to the acknowledgement and praise of the Creator by his creatures.

sacerdos)[44] and this equation is repeated by Hippolytus and in the *Didascalia*. Cyprian works out a set of equations in which 'Christ Himself is the new High Priest, "*summus sacerdos Dei Patris*", the Christian bishop takes the place of the Jewish priest, while the presbyters and deacons represent the Levitical tribe. The office of a bishop is primarily a sacrificial office, as was that of the Jewish priests.'[45]

Whether we speak of high-priests or priests in this connexion matters little. The fact is that there is here a parting of the ways: priesthood is on the way to be completely bound up with the right of a specialized group within the Church to offer the eucharistic sacrifice of bread and cup identified with the body and blood of Christ. The priesthood of all believers, on the other hand, is on the way to become a godly sentiment with little or no relevance to the day-to-day practice of the Church at worship.

The study of the later developments could be carried much farther and into greater detail; but I think enough has been said to make the issues reasonably clear. It seems to me that two things must be maintained: the New Testament doctrine of the high-priesthood of Christ and the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of believers. One thing we must attempt to clarify: the relation of the Church's ministers to the high-priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of believers.

[44] *De bapt.* 17.

[45] J. H. Bernard, 'The Cyprianic Doctrine of the Ministry', in *The Early History of the Church and Ministry*, ed. H. B. Swete, p. 228.

On the subject of the ministry some things can be said at once. The Church has a ministry appointed by God from the earliest days. In the classic exposition of the matter St Paul says to the Corinthian Christians: 'Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed some in the Church, firstly apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers. Then there are miracles, gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of ecstatic speech. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in ecstasy? Do all interpret such speech?'[46] In Ephesians we are told that Christ gave to his Church 'some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, for the complete equipment of the saints for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ' (Eph 4^{11-12}).

This divinely appointed ministry in the Church seems clearly enough to be something less than the total numbers of the members. All are not apostles or prophets or teachers; and these smaller groups exist to help toward a more complete effectiveness of the membership as a whole. In a word, while all believers are priests, all believers are not ministers.

[46] 1 Cor 12^{27-30}. This passage seems to mean that some persons are appointed by God, namely apostles, prophets, and teachers. The remainder of the list is taken up not with persons but with *charismata*. The apostolic, prophetic, and teaching ministries are permanently associated with particular persons: the other gifts may be granted to anyone at any time.

It is legitimate to argue that as all believers are priests and all ministers are believers, therefore all ministers are priests. It is fallacious to argue that since all ministers are priests and all believers are priests, therefore all believers are ministers.

In the light of our discussion the following general conclusions may be drawn :

(1) In the Church of Christ there is one and only one permanent high-priest—Christ himself. It was therefore a grave error when ministers of the Church assumed or accepted the title. It should be an essential part of Free Church principles to maintain the high-priestly along with the crown rights of the Redeemer.

(2) The high-priestly work of Christ consists in his complete oblation of himself in obedience and love to God and in love and service of men. That work, decisively done on the Cross, is continued by Christ in the Church.

(3) The priesthood of believers means that they are permitted and enabled to share in the continuing high-priestly work of Christ by offering themselves in love and obedience to God and in love and service of men.

(4) The focus of this high-priestly work, in which Christ and his people share, is the sacrament of the Eucharist. Here Christ-in-his-Church renews the gift of God's love to his people. Here Christ-in-his-Church, which is his body, offers to God his-Church-in-himself on the altar of self-sacrifice with the ritual

of obedience and love. Let that be deemed a valid Eucharist in which Christ carries on the high-priestly task which is his alone.

(5) The function of the minister who celebrates is to be the representative and spokesman of God through Christ to the congregation and of the congregation to God through Christ. As spokesman to the congregation he recalls to them the things that the Lord Jesus said and did on the night in which he was betrayed (*ἀνάμνησις*). As spokesman for the congregation he utters the words of thanksgiving (*εὐχαριστία*) and oblation (*ἀναφορά*), in which all the believers may express their gratitude and make the offering of themselves. It is a principle of English law that not only must justice be done; it must also be seen to be done. A worthy minister is one who is so far identified with Christ by his calling and by his constantly renewed dedication of himself to God in Christ that the love of God is not only offered to the faithful but is also seen to be offered. A worthy minister is one who is so far identified with his people by sympathy and understanding that they can truly participate in the thanksgiving and self-oblation which he makes on their behalf as on his own.

(6) The Church needs such ministers, who neither arrogate to themselves the high-priestly rights of the Redeemer, nor lord it over the faithful who share in the priesthood of all believers, but are content to be used by Christ to make his own

high-priesthood a more obvious and compelling reality to men and the priesthood of all believers a more effective spiritual force in the world.

(7) Some corollaries follow, which are relevant to present ecumenical discussions. Apart from the eternal high-priesthood of Christ, no ministry is essential to the Church in the sense that the Church could not exist without it. On the other hand, in an imperfect world of sinful and fallible men and women some ministry is necessary in the sense that the Church cannot be fully effective for its tasks without it. What form this ministry should take is a question to be decided in the light of the Church's experience of its own life and work during the last nineteen centuries. The test is pragmatic: 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' All ministers stand or fall by this test. No ministry is exempt. All that Free Churchmen need claim is that they are an integral part of the one Church of Jesus Christ, that their ministry is an integral part of the Church's life and work, and that this ministry of theirs is to be judged by the test to which all Christian ministries are subject.

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